

Claims

1. A method for providing synchronized service in a communications network including user terminals and servers providing services to the user terminals through at least one channel,
- 5 c h a r a c t e r i z e d by the steps of
 - forming at least one group of user terminals and allocating at least one channel to an individual group,
 - transmitting a recording to the terminals of a group thus formed, each recording including timing markers, each of which indicates an internal
 - 10 position within the recording,
 - storing at least part of the recording prior to its playback at each terminal,
 - sending a start command to each terminal of the group,
 - in response to the start command, starting the playback of the
 - 15 recording at each terminal,
 - maintaining status information for the recording, the status information indicating at least the playback position of the recording,
 - transmitting a status message to the terminals, the message indicating new status information concerning the recording, and
 - 20 - changing the playback status at each terminal according to said new status information.
2. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by the further step of storing the recordings in a server.
3. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the
- 25 step of forming includes forming several user groups.
4. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the step of storing includes the storing of the whole recording prior to its playback.
5. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the status information further indicates at least the direction and the speed of the
- 30 playback.
6. A method according to claim 2, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by initiating the start command at the server.
7. A method according to claim 2, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by initiating the start command at a user terminal.
- 35 8. A method according to claim 2, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by sending the status message from the server.
9. A method according to claim 8, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by sending

the status message in response to a status command from a user terminal.

10. A method according to claim 1, characterized by the further steps of

- assigning different priorities to the terminals of a group,
- 5 - sending new status information from more than one terminal, and
- generating the status message on the basis of the status information sent from the terminal with the highest priority of said more than one terminals.

11. A method according to claim 1, characterized by the further steps of

- 10 - assigning each terminal predetermined control operations by means of which the terminal is entitled to control the playback,
- sending new status information from a terminal,
- checking the control operations assigned to said terminal, and
- generating the status message in response to said checking.

15 12. A system for providing synchronized playback of recordings in a communications network with transmission channels, the system comprising

- a server for managing recordings stored within the system,
- user terminals for storing and playing the recordings, and
- transmission means for transmitting the recordings to the terminals
- 20 through at least one channel,

characterized in that each recording includes timing markers (TM), each of which indicates an internal position within the recording, and that the system further includes

- first management means for maintaining information on user groups
- 25 formed in the system, the information indicating the user terminal(s) belonging to each group, the channel(s) assigned to each group, and the recording(s) being used by the group,

- second management means for maintaining status information for said recordings, the status information indicating at least the playback position
- 30 of the recording,

- first control means for sending status information to the user terminals of a group, and

- second control means at each user terminal, responsive to the first control means, for controlling the playback in the terminal according to said
- 35 status information.

13. A system according to claim 12, characterized in that the system further includes a centralized database for storing the recordings.

14. A system according to claim 12, characterized in that the status information further indicates the direction and the speed of the playback.

5 15. A system according to claim 12, characterized in that the first management means reside in the server.

16. A system according to claim 12, characterized in that the first control means reside in the server.

17. A system according to claim 12, characterized in that the second management means reside at least in the server.

10 18. A system according to claim 12, characterized in that user terminals are terminals of a mobile network.